

A HALF-LIFE AND HALF A LIFE.

A Story That is Based on Big Sandy Experience and Was First Published Half A Century Ago

MY knowledge of the river stood Mr. Hammond in good stead that morning, as soon as I understood that he was looking for a place where his men could land easily. It was only to sweep round a small bluff that jutted into the river, and carry the skiff into the mouth of Nat's Creek, where the bank sloped gradually down to the water from a level bit of meadowland that extended back some 100 feet before the hills began to rise. Mr. Hammond leaped out.

"The very place,—and here, on a point shall be my saw-mill. I'll run the road through here and up the creek to the mining-ground, and build my store under the ledge there, and my shanties on each side of the road."

I caught his enthusiasm, and my shyness all gone, I found myself listening and suggesting more than that I found my suggestions attended to. I knew the river well; I knew what points of land would be overflowed in the June rise; I knew how far the backwater would reach up the creek; I knew the least obstructed paths through the woods; I could even tell where the most available timber was to be found. I felt, too, that my knowledge was appreciated. George Hammond had that one best gift that belongs to all successful leaders, whether of armies, colonies, or bands of miners; he recognized merit when he saw it. From that morning a feeling of self-respect dawned upon me, I was not so alto-

gether as I had thought. I had some available knowledge; and with that feeling came the determination to raise myself out of that slough of despond into which I had fallen the night before.

From that time a sort of friendship sprang up between George Hammond and myself. Every morning I rowed him across the river, and, in the early morning light, before the workmen were out of bed, he talked over, partly to himself and partly to me, his plans for the day and his vexations of the day before, until I began to offer advice and make suggestions, which made him laughing. I call me his little counselor.

Then in the evenings the step at my father's; he would pick up my books and amuse himself with talking to me about them, laugh at my crude enthusiasms, clear up some difficult passage, prune away remorselessly the trash that had crept into my little collection, until, one day, returning from Cincinnati, where business had called him, he brought with him a store of books inexchangeable to my inexperienced eyes, and declared himself my teacher for the winter.

"Never mind Janet's knitting and mending, Mrs. Boarders," said he, in reply to my mother's complaints, "she is a smart girl, and may be a schoolmistress yet, and earn more money than any woman on Sandy."

"But I am afraid," my step-mother answered, "that the books she reads are not good, and have no grace in them. They look to me like players' trash. I've tried to do my duty to Janet," she continued, plaintively, "but I hope the Lord won't hold me accountable for her headstrong ways."

Meanwhile, as I read in one of my books, and repeated to myself over and over again in my fulness of content,—

"How happily the days
Of Thelma went by!"

How rapidly fled that winter, and how soon came the spring, that would bring me, I thought, new hopes, new interests, new companions!

How changed a scene did I look upon, that bright April morning, when I went over the river to see that all was in readiness for the boats from below which were to bring Esther Hammond to her new home! She was to keep her brother's house, and furniture, books, and pictures, such as I had never dreamed of, had been sent up by the last returning boatmen, all of which I had helped Mr. Hammond to arrange in the little two-story cottage which stood on the first rise of the hill behind the store.

A little plot of ground was hedged in with young orange shrubs, within it one of the miners, who had formerly been an under-gardener, had a house in Scotland, had already prepared some flower-beds and carefully the little lawn, lying down the walks with bright-colored daisies which contrasted pleasantly with the green of the grass. From the gate one might look up and down the road, bordered on one side by the

trees that hung over the river, and on the other by the miners' houses, one-story cottages, each with a small enclosure, and showing every degree of cultivation, from the new vegetable-patch and whitewashed outhouse of the Scotch families to the waste ground and slovenly potato-patch of the Irishmen. They were some Sandilans among the hat, but they never could be made to take one of the houses prepared for the miners. They lived back on three, generally on their own land, and raised corn and tobacco, either for sale or for their own use. Some of them, and hunted or rode about, taking jobs only when it felt so inclined, but showing themselves fully able to compete with the hands both in skill and industry, when they were willing to work.

On the side of the hill at the creek could be seen the entrance to the mines, and down that there passed constantly the cars, loaded with earth and stone taken from the tunnel, which fell with a thud sound into the valley beneath. Below me was the store, say was multitudes of goods, which met all the needs of the miners and their wives, from the garden-tooled seeds for the afternoon-work to the gay-colored dresses for the leisure, where, too, on a bright, whiskey was to be had, change for the scrip in which wages were paid, and where, times, the noise waxed fast and loud, till Mr. Hammond would off the supply of liquor, as the means of stilling the tumult.

On this side the river all was changed. But as I looked that morning across the stream towards my step-father's farm, my own home, everything there lay as wild and unimproved as I had known it since the first day my mother brought me there, comfortless and disorderly as it was when, child as I was, I could remember the tears of fatigue and discouragement which she dropped upon my face as she put me for the first time into my little crib; but there, too, were still (and my heart exulted as I saw them) the glorious water-mill, the giant sycamores, and the bright-colored chestnut-trees, which I had known and loved so long. Would Miss Hammond see how beautiful they were? would she praise them as her brother had done? would she listen as kindly to my rhapsodies about them? and would she say, as he had said, that I was a poet by nature, with a poet's quick appreciation of beauty and the poet's gift of enthusiastic expression? I could not tell whether Esther Hammond would be to me the friend her brother had been, with the added blessing that, being a woman, I could go freely to her with my deficiencies in sure dependence upon her aid and sympathy,—or if she would come to stand between me and him, to take away from me my friend and teacher. Time alone would show; and meanwhile I must be busy with my preparations, for the boats were expected at noon, and Mr. Hammond, who had ridden down to Louisa to meet them, had said that he depended upon me to have things cheerful and in order when they arrived.

Two hours' hard work saw everything in its place, the furniture arranged to the best of my ability, but wanting, as I sorely felt, the touch of a mistress's hand to give it a home-like look. I had done my best, but what did I know of the arrangement of a lady's house? I hardly knew the use of half the things I touched. But I would not let my old spirit of discontent creep over me now; so, bending myself to the work, which were full of the loveliest spring flowers I brought back from a garden of violets, spring crocuses, and white Moorish-blossoms, but the whole room was lighted with their beauty, while their faint, delicate perfume filled the air.

"Sorely these must please her," I said to myself, as I put the last bouquet on the table, and stepped back to see the result of my work. "They certainly will, Janet," said George Hammond, who had entered behind me. "How well you have worked, and how pleasant everything looked! Esther will be so much obliged to you. She is just below in the boat. Will you not come with me and help her up the bank?"

But I hung back, bashful and frightened, while he called some of the men to his assistance, and, hurrying down to the river, landed the boat, and was pleasantly seen walking toward the house with a lady leaning upon his arm. I saw her from the window. A tall, dignified wo-

man, with a face,—yes, beautiful, certainly, for there were the regular features, the dark eyes, with their straight brows, the heavy, dark hair, parted over the fair, smooth forehead, but so quiet, so cold, so almost haughty, that my heart stood still with an undefined alarm.

She came in and sat down in one of the chairs without taking the least notice of me. Mr. Hammond spoke,—

"This is Janet Rainsford, my little friend that I told you of, Esther. I hope you will be as good friends as we have been. She will show you every beautiful place around the country, and make you acquainted with the people, too."

Miss Hammond looked at me with a steadiness of gaze under which my eyes sank.

"I shall not trouble the young person much, since I shall only walk when you can go with me; and as for the people, it is not necessary for me to know them, I suppose."

George Hammond hit his lip.

"Janet has taken great pains to put everything in order for us here. I should hardly know the room, if it is so improved since I left it this morning."

"She is very kind," said his sister, languidly; "but, George, how horribly this furniture is arranged,—the sofa across the window, the centre-table in the corner."

"O, you will have plenty of time to arrange it, Esther. Come, let me show you your own room; you will want to rest while your Dutch girl—what's her name?—Caroline?—gets us something to eat."

Miss Hammond followed her brother to her room, while, mortified and angry with her, with myself, I escaped from the house, jumped into my skiff, and hardly stopped to breathe till I had reached my own little garret. I flung myself on my bed, and burst into bitter tears of resentment and despair. So, after all my pains, after my endeavors to improve myself, after all I had done, I was not worth the notice of a real lady. I supposed I was an uncouth, awkward girl, disagreeable enough to her; she would not want to see me near her. All I had done was miserable; it would have been better to let things alone. I never would go near her again,—that was certain,—she should not be troubled by me; and my tears fell hot and fast upon my pillow. Then came my old soliloquy. Why was she any better than I? Her brother thought me worth talking to; could she not find me worthy of at least a kind look? Perhaps she knew more than I did of books; but what of that? She had not half the useful knowledge wherewith to make her way here in the woods. And what right had she to bring her haughty looks and proud ways here among our people? My soliloquy gave way before my bitter disappointment and my offended pride. I was only a child of sixteen, sensitive and distrustful of myself, and her cold looks and cold words had keenly wounded me.

A week passed, in which I gave myself most earnestly to the household tasks, going through them with dogged pertinacity and accomplishing an amount of work which made my step-mother declare that Janet was coming back to her senses after all. It was only my effort to forget my disappointment.

On the Saturday evening when I sat out with my exertions, Mr. Hammond came up the path. How my heart leaped at seeing him! How good he was to come! His sister had not taught him to despise me, but when he asked me to come over the next day, and see what he had done to his house and garden, the demon of sullen pride took possession of me again. I would not go. I had too much to do; my mother would want me to get the dinner. In short, I could not go. He bore it good-naturedly, though I think he understood it, and, leaving with me a package of books which he had promised me, said he must go. His sister would be waiting tea for him.

Many another endeavor did George Hammond make to bring his sister and myself together, but the first impression had been too strong for us, and Miss Hammond made no effort to remove it. I do not believe it ever crossed her mind to try to do so. Little was it to her whether or no she made herself pleasant to a stupid, ugly girl. She had her books, her light household cares, her letter-writing, her gardening, her walks and drives with her brother, and she felt and showed little interest in anything else. Very unpopular she was among the people around her, who contrasted her cold reserve with her brother's frank cordiality, but she troubled herself not about her unpopularity. For me, I kept shy out of her way, and fell back into my old habits.

I had not lost my friend, Mr. Hammond. He did not read with me regularly as before, but he kept me supplied with books, and the infrequency of his lessons stimulated me to redoubled effort, that I might surprise him by my progress when

we met again. Then there was scarcely a day that some business did not take him past our house, or that I did not meet him by the river-bank or at the store. Sometimes he would ask me to row him down the stream on some errand, sometimes he would take me with him in his rides. I was a fearless horsewoman, and Miss Hammond did not ride. In all those meetings he was frank and kind as ever; he told me of his plans, his annoyances, his projects. No, I had not lost my friend, as I had feared, and when assured of this, I could do without Miss Hammond.

(To be continued.)

Corn Exhibit.

George H. Stephenson, secretary of the National Corn Exposition, which is held annually at Omaha, Neb., in conference with Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture J. W. Rankin with reference to securing an appropriate exhibit from Kentucky at this year's exposition, which will be held in December. The exposition desires to secure the co-operation of the State Agricultural Department and the State University in its work, and to induce the latter to send an educational exhibit to Omaha, as well as secure exhibits from the farmers of their products of corn, grain and grasses. About \$54,000 in premiums was offered at last year's exposition, and Secretary Stephenson feels certain that the premium list will go that large this year. Classes are arranged for the various States and then what might be called national sweepstakes are offered. Secretary Stephenson has been through several other Southern States and has met with much success in his efforts to secure exhibitions from this section of the country. The State Agricultural Department of Kentucky will do everything in its power to bring the matter before the farmers of this State and it is believed that a suitable exhibit from Kentucky will be made at the coming show.

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7254.

Report of the condition of THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK at Prestonsburg, in the State of Kentucky, at the close of business, June 23, 1909.

RESOURCES.	
Loans and discounts	\$41,915.30
Overdrafts, secured and unsecured	3,008.86
U. S. Bonds to secure circulation	6,500.00
U. S. Bonds to secure U. S. Deposits	10,000.00
U. S. Bonds on hand	1,038.33
Premiums on U. S. Bonds	1,038.33
Banking house, furniture, and fixtures	2,799.10
Other real estate owned	1,850.00
Due from National Banks (not reserve assets)	263.12
Due from State Banks and Bankers	
Due from approved reserve agents	5,412.32
Checks and other cash items	76.21
Notes of other National Banks	1,200.00
Fractional paper currency, Nickels and cents	49.03
Lawful Money reserve in Bank, viz: Specie	\$3,887.50
Legal-tender notes	\$1,000.00
Redemption fund with U. S. Treasurer	325.00
Total	\$80,124.86

LIABILITIES.	
Capital stock paid in	\$5,000.00
Surplus fund	960.42
Undivided profits, less expenses and taxes paid	4,499.54
National Bank notes outstanding	6,200.00
Due other National Banks	292.55
Due State Banks and Bankers	896.47
Individual deposits subject to check	38,296.88
Certified checks	
U. S. Deposits	\$10,000.00
Reserved for Taxes	
Total	\$80,124.86

State of Kentucky,
County of Floyd, ss:

I, J. M. Weddington, Cashier of the above named bank, do solemnly swear that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. J. M. WEDDINGTON, Cashier. Subscribed and sworn to before me this 26th day of June, 1909.

WALTER W. REYNOLDS,
Notary Public.
My commission will expire May 20, 1910.

Correct-Attest:
W. R. Callahan,
W. H. May,
A. J. May, Directors.

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60 acres practically all level land, good fence all round the farm, dwelling, barn, plenty running water all the year, and good well. This is a rare bargain for any one who is willing to do a little repair work on buildings. Price \$20 per acre. 100 acres, 50 level, 60 cleared. Close to school and church. 5 wells and plenty running water. 1 five room dwelling, tenant house, barn, tool shed, stock shed, straw shed, 2 corn cribs, hog house, hen house, smoke house, milk house, and plenty best of fence. An ideal grain and stock farm. Wants to settle up an estate. Price \$25.00 per acre.

A splendid grain, stock and dairy farm, 133 acres. 50 acres level and rolling, 100 acres cleared, plenty good timber, 2 dwellings, 2 barns, well watered and fenced, close to good school on good pike. This farm will be sold at the great bargain of \$15 per acre if taken at once.

80 acres, fine level land, good frame dwelling, new barn 26x60 feet, cistern and never failing well, plenty running water. 25 acres under cultivation, 20 acres pasture, 15 acres woods, balance meadow. Plenty of nice timber, not an acre of waste land. On good pike, in best of neighborhoods, new traction line will pass within one mile, oil and gas developments will soon begin. Price \$4500.00 if sold at once. All to easy reach of Chillicothe, one of the best markets in Ohio. I have plenty of others, for particulars call on or address John R. Preston, R. F. D. No. 7, Chillicothe, Ohio.

Notice!

Planning well, and real estate on which same is located, for sale. Any lumberman can make large profits, if managed properly. Local trade fine; shipping facilities good. Can purchase all timber desired at the farm Big-Sandy river. Any particulars may be had by writing B. R. S. Mfg. Co., Louisa, Ky. Or H. C. Sullivan, Attorney. 2nd-July-21

FOR SALE.

Best farm of its size near Louisa, known as the Loe and See farm; below bridge; 189 acres—40 acres rich, high bottom land—20 acres + watered land. New five room house, metal roof, weather boarded and painted. One mile below bridge in W. Va. Call on or address F. H. YATES, Louisa, Ky.

For Sale.

I have for sale 747 acres of coal, ore and all other minerals to lease or sell. This mineral is on Tug fork of Big Sandy and adjoins Gid Williamson, and known as the Frank tract.

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